

Testimony in Support of
House Bill 786: Department of Human Services, Maryland Department of Health, and
Department of Education - Easing Access to Family Support Programs
February 10, 2021

Chair McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for allowing me to come before you and offer testimony in support of **House Bill 786: Department of Human Services, Maryland Department of Health, and Department of Education - Easing Access to Family Support Programs**. If enacted, this bill would require multiple State departments to work together to create a more streamlined approach for families to access support programs.

Maryland has amazing programs to assist low-income families, but complicated forms and confusing methods make it difficult to understand eligibility. One family in search of a food assistance program may also be eligible for a child care program, yet they have no idea and may not have the knowledge or resources to apply for both.

This legislation is the first step in establishing a comprehensive system for residents of Maryland to be informed of their eligibility for state programs and apply for programs simply and efficiently. By establishing that it is the policy of the State to alleviate administrative burdens on families, the State recognizes that these problems exist and promises resources to solve these issues.

Last year, legislation passed related to a commission to coordinate benefits and support through the collaboration of multiple state representatives and government agencies. That bill, HB 1363 was created at the request of the Study Group on Economic Stability to form a commission to study and implement programs, but it did not target the administrative issues surrounding them. Now, with more families struggling due to the economic downturn spurred by the pandemic, streamlining these programs is more important than ever before.

Marylanders deserve a simple, efficient process, as do legislators such as yourselves who have advocated so strongly for such programs to exist.

I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 786**. Thank You.